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Major Heroin Seizure Announced in Pueblo, Colorado

Twenty-Four Defendants Arrested, Ten Pounds Black Tar Heroin, $43,131 Cash, Two Guns, and 12 Vehicles Seized

Heroin found in a hidden compartment.

AUG 10 -- DENVER – Kevin R. Merrill, Acting Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Luis Velez, Chief, Pueblo Police Department, and Bill Thiebaut, District Attorney, Colorado's Tenth Judicial District, announced today the successful completion of a major heroin investigation with the arrest of 24 defendants. There are an additional five suspects who are fugitives in this investigation. Those who were arrested are facing various drug charges in Colorado State District Court in Pueblo.

This nine-month investigation focused on a heroin trafficking organization headed by Juan Ramon Rocha Rodriguez. Rocha Rodriguez was responsible for the transport of large quantities of heroin from Southern California into Colorado for distribution and sale in Pueblo.

The investigation culminated this past Friday, August 5, 2011, when investigators seized 10.3 pounds of black tar heroin from a vehicle. The heroin was concealed in a hidden compartment. Also seized during the investigation were $43,131 cash, 2 handguns, and 12 vehicles.

The Defendants in this case are:
Juan Ramon Rocha-Rodriguez, 40, of Pueblo, Colorado
Rodney Lee Hanks, 54, of Mooreport, California
Esmeralda Rodriguez, 36, of Pueblo, Colorado
Josefina Garcia-Rodriguez, 23, of Pueblo, Colorado
Juan Rodriguez-Duarte, 24, of Pueblo, Colorado
Alonso Barajas-Duenas, 45, of Pueblo, Colorado
Jesus Mares-Libraro, 40, of Pueblo, Colorado
Matthew James Mcdaniel, 28, of Pueblo, Colorado
Sharleen Robin Trujillo, 38, of Pueblo, Colorado
Jessica Aleece Miller, 32, of Pueblo, Colorado
Edward Loomis, 36, of Pueblo, Colorado
Matthew Marshall Day, 32, of Pueblo, Colorado
Eric Alaniz Romero, 27, of Pueblo, Colorado
Justina Virginia Montoya, 25, of Pueblo, Colorado
David Wayne Weber, 20, of Pueblo, Colorado
Donald Henry Beckemeyer, 31, of Pueblo, Colorado
Jared Thomas Peterson, 30, of Pueblo, Colorado
Justin Robert Bigner, 32, of Pueblo, Colorado
Jessica Nicole Breaux, 33, of Pueblo, Colorado
Aurea Mendoza, 21, of Pueblo, Colorado
John Mariano, 26, of Pueblo, Colorado
Jose Angel Contreras-Suarez, 21, of Pueblo, Colorado
Two Juveniles

Fugitives:
Felipe Hernandez-Sanchez, 33, of Pueblo, Colorado
Raul Perez-Garcia, 53, of Pueblo, Colorado
Miguel Ochea-Gonzales, 27, of Pueblo, Colorado
Jesse Llamas, 11-10-1983, 27, of Pueblo, Colorado
Jose Eduardo Inda-Artega, 24, of Pueblo, Colorado

Acting Special Agent in Charge Merrill said, “What is disturbing to me about this case is the fact that the bulk of the seized heroin was to be sold in the Pueblo area – not destined for some major city. Black tar heroin is an extremely dangerous substance. We ask the help of the public in locating those defendants who are considered fugitives by calling our office in Colorado Springs or the Pueblo Police Department with any information as to their whereabouts.”

“Chief Velez reiterated that these drug trafficking organizations will always face enhanced scrutiny, arrests, and prosecution if caught in the City of Pueblo.” Chief Velez also said, “Our Pueblo Police Officers, and our partners in the DEA, have worked tirelessly to bring these individuals to justice. They won’t stop until all of these suspects are in custody.”

The time and resources of the District Attorney’s Office must focus on taking dangerous drugs off our streets and out of our community--it is a high priority when compared to the competing demands of other cases,” District Attorney Thiebaut said. And he went on to say, “to get that job done it takes cooperative efforts among the DEA, the Pueblo Police Department, other local and federal law enforcement agencies, and the District Attorney’s Office —now our office will move into the prosecution phase.”

The charges made against the defendants are allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

This case was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Pueblo Police Department, and the District Attorney’s Office for the Tenth Judicial District, with assistance from the Pueblo County Sheriff’s Office, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and the Department of Homeland Security/HSI/ICE.

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